



*Protecting, maintaining and improving the health of all Minnesotans*

August 1, 2011

Ms. Marlene Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20554  
RE: IB Docket No. 11-109; Technical Working Group Report

Dear Ms. Dortch,

I am writing to encourage the Commission to support expanded development of multiple broadband technologies in rural areas, including wireless broadband, to benefit rural health care.

The Office of Rural Health and Primary Care promotes access to quality health care for rural and underserved urban Minnesotans. From our unique position within state government, we work as partners with communities, providers, policymakers and other organizations. Together, we develop innovative approaches and tailor our tools and resources to the diverse populations we serve.

Large areas of rural Minnesota face challenges attracting and retaining health care professionals. The use of telemedicine can help address this problem, by linking rural clinics and primary care providers with specialists and sub-specialists located in urban areas. This allows rural patients to receive specialized care close to home without having to spend hours traveling to see their provider. As noted in a MINNEAPOLIS STARTRIBUNE story on Wednesday, July 27 about a recent rural health care study conducted by United Healthcare, "Expanding the nation's broadband network is crucial to improving care, according to the study, because many illnesses can be handled over the Internet."

However, large portions of rural Minnesota lack reliable broadband internet coverage. Consequently, the benefits of telemedicine are not available to all and rural residents must incur additional expense and travel time to receive care. We need reliable and affordable wireless broadband throughout Minnesota, and we urge the Federal Communications Commission to move quickly to support proposals to apply innovative technology solutions, including wireless broadband, to enhance the delivery of health care in rural America.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Schoenbaum", is located below the "Sincerely," text.

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